HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

A Resume is a Summary of Your Skills

There is no easy way to get a good job. But you can increase your chances for getting an interview when you market yourself with an effective resume. A resume is your 30 second marketing tool. Therefore, it should attract attention in a creative manner, stress your achievements and accomplishments and the benefits of hiring you, and provoke action on the part of the employer to meet you. Being able to persuade a potential employer effectively takes skill.

Preparing a successful resume also requires commitment to the task. It usually takes several rough drafts before an impressive document is created. Keep in mind, a different resume is ideally needed for each employer since your achievements demonstrate your ability to meet the needs of that particular employer.

In order to market yourself effectively, you need to know what to include in a resume. As you begin, think about who you are, what you want, and what you have to offer an employer. Since all elements of a resume focus on the job objective, this preparation step is essential!

Selecting Your Format

The key areas of your personal history make up the content of your resume regardless if you are new to the workforce or an experienced worker. The content varies from one individual to another so the format you choose is one that will work best for you. Although there are many formats from which to choose, the two most common are the chronological and the functional style formats.

The chronological format works best if you have a consecutive record of employment in an area that is similar to the one in which you are seeking employment. The format is read easily by employers. Work history and education are usually listed in reverse chronological order. Each job is described separately. This format includes dates, job titles, and names of employers.

The functional format is best used when planning a career shift and where direct job-related experience is lacking. Qualifications, skills, functions, and related accomplishments are grouped into three to five specialized categories without breaking them down by jobs. These functional areas are each given a specific heading on the resume.

The combination format is a combination of the chronological and functional resumes. The combination format highlights skills *and* experience.

The creative format is non-traditional in style and is recommended only for creative career fields. Please see the Career/Transfer Center for more information.

Categories of a Resume

Examples of categories to include in your resume are:

Personal Identification – You first, middle initial and last name, street address, area code and contact phone number and email are noted at the top of the page. This section should stand out on the page.

Job Objective: The job objective states the position you desire and includes a statement of your three to five highest strengths or skill levels that you can offer an employer.

Summary of Qualifications: This optional area also summarizes your qualifications and strengths demonstrating how you have made positive differences, advantages, and changes.

Work Experience: This section is structured based on the format you have selected. Refer to the information above.

Education: List formal education with names of colleges, graduation dates, degrees, certificates, credentials, and licenses earned. Include special workshops, seminars, noncredit courses, and self-taught skills when they are appropriate to your job objective.

Awards and Honors: List awards, honors, and scholarships you have received.

Special Skills: Describe your abilities with computers and specific software, reading, speaking, or writing of foreign languages, operating specific machinery and equipment, etc. If your interests or hobbies relate to the job, include them as well.

Writing Tips for the Hard Copy Resume

Content
1. Demonstrate results, problem-solving, achievements and specific examples of successful performance including voluntary and military experience.
2. Omit information about political, religious, philosophical preferences, special interest activities, or associations unless you are applying for a job with an organization that fully supports the work of those groups.
3. Eliminate personal data such as Social Security number, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, height and weight, health condition, physical disabilities, marital status, and number of children.
4. Omit experience that is over 10 years ago unless it directly relates to the position that you are seeking.
5. Do not include personal and business references on a resume! List these on a separate sheet of paper and present them when requested by the employer.

Writing Style
1. Develop brief, clear, phrases using "power" words and action verbs within short paragraphs.
2. Describe results in measurable terms such as numbers, percentages, dollars, increases, decreases, etc.
3. Use the language of the employer *– some of the same words or terms used in the job announcement.*
4. Use acceptable jargon of the occupation for which you are applying.
5. No abbreviations.
6. Convert highly technical and military language into easy to understand or civilian words.
7. **Avoid** use of personal pronouns (e.g. I, me, she, he)
8. Check for proper grammar, correct punctuation and spelling!

Writing Tips for the Email Resume

The best way to submit a resume via email is to save your resume as a PDF document. To do this, simply complete the following steps when using Microsoft Word:

1. Click on the "File" tab at the top left hand corner (this will be the Office Button in Word 2007).
2. Select "Save As."
3. Type in the title of your resume under "File name" (e.g., "JohnDoeResume").
4. Click on the dropdown menu under "Save as type" and select "PDF."
5. This should generate a PDF version of your resume. Attach this document to your email message.

Since it is difficult to proof one's own work, **it is wise to have your resume critiqued by someone else**. Show it to at least two other people who would have knowledge of the type of work you're seeking. Ask for an objective analysis, not friendly pats on the back. Continue revising your rough drafts until you feel comfortable that the resume communicates consistency, clarity, content, conciseness, coherency, completeness, and confidence. Your resume can then produce successful results for you.

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